

EXHIBIT TT

Exhibit A

The Kindest

Brilliance Version

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The Kindest

When I was dying, people were nicer to me. Nurses washed my hair. Old teachers and old roommates and total randoms came to see me, kissing my bandaged hand. Bao brought me underwear and slept beside me on a chair. Mom flew from Philly, Dad from ND, and Sui from Xian, all the way across the planet. The flowers! The questions! *What hurts? How much?* I was scared and they wanted to hear all about it. No one said Why? or How come? or How could you? No one rolled their eyes or said Well I'd better get going. They didn't let me smoke, but I saw them mull it over, as if to say Well it isn't going to kill her. They leaned forward. They were riveted. They were hungry and I was their food.

Getting born must be like that. If you could remember. But you can't.

Then along came my Angel. A real one, too: no accident of her own, no sudden onset anything. She wasn't dead, and she wasn't even doing a chain thing, aimed ultimately to save her husband or her sister or her very best bud.

It was just that she had two kidneys and she only needed one. And on top of that, grinned the surgeon: we matched.

That night a thin tube dripped cold dreams into my elbow. Bao squeezed my fingers and kissed the cross around his neck. "It's happening," he said.

liked watching the garbage men hurl them into the truck, those grimy walls descending to slurp them up for good.

Right about then is when the letter shows up.

Bao was at work. It was a sunny, ignorant day.

It came in the mailbox: real envelope and paper and gold sticker sealing the flap. It was wrapped in a second letter from the surgeon himself, his boxy handwriting rushed with loops of fervor. So awestruck was he by the selflessness that he just had to chaperone the missive himself. I looked at his letter. I thought that doctors couldn't write at all, not even their own names.

Then came hers. She had used a notepad shaped like a daisy. Blue gel pen.

Dear Recipient,

My name is Rose Rothario. I'm a thirty-eight-year-old white female, and I live in Greater Boston.

In 2015 I saw my first documentary about living kidney donation, and from that point forward I was constantly reminded of the urgent need for kidneys in our country. Equipped with this new awareness, I set forth on a journey to make a maximum impact on another's life with only minimal risk to myself.

I dropped open the letter. Six whole daisy pages. Stuff about her surgery, the prep, the PT. It went on.

I'm grateful to the entire transplant team at MGH, who gave such attentive care from my very first blood test to the date of our paired exchange. My own childhood was

marked by trauma and abuse; I wasn't given an opportunity to form secure attachments with my family of origin. But in adulthood that experience provided a strong sense of empathy. While others might desire to give to a family member or friend, to me the suffering of strangers is just as real.

A few things about me: I like sailing, camping, jewelry, and cats.

As I prepared to make this gift, what sustained me was the knowledge that my recipient would be getting a second chance at life. I channeled my energies into imagining and celebrating YOU.

I stared at the YOU, underlined three times.

My gift, you must know, trails no strings. You deserve all that life has to offer, simply because you exist.

That said, I would love to know more about you. Perhaps we could meet. But I accept any level of involvement, even if it is none.

Warmly,

Rose M. Rothario

There was a photograph. She was tall, slender, a bursting ponytail harnessed to one side. Scissors had cut away the image near her shoulder, as if to remove a person who'd been standing beside her. I held it to my nose but it just smelled like a photograph: paper and faint glue, with no whiff of a particular person. She was at some county fair. She was around my age. She was standing by a Tilt-A-Whirl, surrounded by blurry feet, holding a rainbow-swirled lollipop in her fist.